

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3594

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 1144

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LY, EG

SUBJ: CONTINUING DETERIORATION OF LIBYA-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

SUMMARY: LIBYAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE
WITH CUTTING OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN RESPECTIVE RELA-
TIONS OFFICES AND FOREIGN MINISTRIES, AND LARG ARRESTS
OF ALLEGED EGYPTIAN SPIES. MEDIA PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN
PREPARE LIBYANS FOR WAR WITH EGYPT, QUESTIONS AFFECT
ON EGYPTIANS IN LARG. COMMENT: LARG ANTICIPATES
MILITARY ATTACK FROM EGYPT WHICH IT HOPES TO EXPLOIT
AND CAUSE OVERTHROW OF SADAT. BRINKMANSHIP DIPLOMACY
MAY ESCALATE CRISIS BEYOND CONTROL OF EITHER COUNTRY.
END SUMMARY.

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1. RELATIONS BETWEEN LIBYA AND EGYPT DETERIORATED EVEN FURTHER WITH LATEST REPORTED LARG NOTIFICATION TO EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS IN TRIPOLI OF ITS INTENTION TO SEVER TELECOMMUNICATIONS LINKS OF EGYPTIAN RELATIONS BUREAU WITH ITS FOREIGN MINISTRY IN CAIRO. LARG REPORTEDLY THREATENED ACTION AS A ALLEGEDLY CUT SIMILAR COMMUNICATIONS OF LIBYAN BUREAU OFFICE IN CAIRO WITH TRIPOLI. LARG AUTHORITIES INDICATED TELECOMMUNICATIONS LINES OF EGYPTIAN BUREAU WILL NOT BE RECONNECTED UNTIL THOSE OF ITS OFFICE IN CAIRO ARE REESTABLISHED.

2. LARG AUTHORITIES REPORTEDLY HAVE ARRESTED EGYPTIAN EMPLOYEE OF LIBYAN CIVIL AVIATION OFFICE WHOM AUTHORITIES HAVE CHARGED WITH ESPIONAGE ACTIVITIES. LARG AUTHORITIES CLAIM ALLEGED SPY MUHAMMAD MURAD AL-KHULI WORKED FOR ESPIONAGE NETWORK OPERATING FROM THE PREMISES OF THE EGYPTIAN RELATIONS OFFICE IN TRIPOLI, AND HEADED BY EGYPTIAN 1ST SECRETARY MAMDUD MUNIB WHOM LARG AUTHORITIES ARRESTED AND ACCUSED OF BEING AN OFFICER IN EGYPTIAN STATE SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE. INFORMED SOURCE ALSO INDICATES THAT EGYPTIAN RELATIONS OFFICE COUNSELLOR AHMED ADEL REPORTEDLY PACKING IN ANTICIPATION OF DEPARTURE FROM TRIPOLI.

3. LARG AUTHORITIES CLAIM TWO EGYPTIANS ARRESTED AUGUST 24 IN SEBHA AIRPORT CONFESSED THEY WERE RECRUITED BY MAJOR GNERAL MOHAMMAD MINSUHWI TO CARRY OUT SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES AND ASSASSINATIONS IN LARG. DETAINEES REPORTEDLY ARE PRIVATE IBRAHAM RIZQ HASAN AND PRIVATE MOHAMMAD MAHMUD AL BASUNI. LARG AUTHORITIES CLAIM SEARCH OF DETAINEES' LUGGAGE REVEALED NUMBER OF WEAPONS.

4. LARG MEDIA CONTINUES TO ATTACK EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT WHOM MEDIA CLAIMS HAS REJECTED ALL OVERTURES FROM VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS TO MEDIATE LARG-EGYPTIAN DISPUTE. MEDIA ALLEGES SADAT REFUSAL OF RECONCILIATION PROOF OF THIS INTENTIONS TO START WAR AGAINST LIBYA TO DIVERT EGYPTIAN PEOPLE FROM DOMESTIC
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PROBLEMS. LARG MEDIA ACCUSES SADAT OF BEATING DRUMS OF WAR AND WARNS SADAT OF CONSEQUENCES OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN TWO NATIONS. AL FAJR AL JIHAD AGUSUT 23 EDITORIAL ASKED RHETORICAL QUESTION OF AFFECT ON QUARTER OF A MILLION EGYPTIAN CITIZENS OUT OF LIBYA. EDITORIAL DESCRIBES EGYPTIANS WORKING IN LIBYA AS MAJOR LABOR FORCE WHICH WOULD IN THE EVENT OF WAR BE REQUIRED TO

DEPART AS A PRELIMINARY STEP PRIOR TO THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES. THE EDITORIAL CLAIMS THE STATE OF WAR BETWEEN LIBYA AND EGYPT HAS BEEN CREATED BY CONCENTRATION OF EGYPTIAN FORCES ON THE LIBYAN BORDER AND EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES SHOULD RECONSIDER THIS MOVE. EDITORIAL ASKS EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES WHETHER THEY ARE PREPARED TO RECEIVE A QUARTER OF A MILLION EGYPTIAN CITIZENS AT ONE TIME, THAT OFFICIALS ARE AWARE THAT PRELIMINARY ACTION PRECEDING THE DECLARATION OF WAR REQUIRED ALL EGYPTIAN CITIZENS TO LEAVE LIBYA. EDITORIAL ASKS WILL EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS BE ABLE TO RECEIVE AND EMPLOY THESE WORKERS.

5. IN RELATE MOVE DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUE INFORMS US QADHAFI HAS REQUESTED VARIOUS MINISTRY HEADS TO INDICATE ABILITY OF THEIR MINISTRIES TO FUNCTION GIVEN POSSIBILITY OF REMOVAL OF EGYPTIAN EMPLOYEES.

6. AS MEDIA CONTINUES TO STRESS IMMINENT OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES AUG. 24 EDITORIAL SUGGESTS LARG ANTICIPATES POPULAR EGYPTIAN UPRISING AGAINST SADAT IN THE EVENT OF HOSTILITIES. MEDIA CLAIMS EGYPTIAN TROOPS HAVE ALREADY DESERTED POSITIONS ALONG EGYPTIAN-LIBYAN BORDER RATHER THAN PARTICIPATE IN WAR AGAINST LIBYA. MEDIA ALSO CLAIMS SADAT HAS IMPOSED 4 PM TO 8 PM CURFEW IN REGION PARALLEL TO LIBYAN BORDER. POL OFFICER WHO RETURNED AUG. 25 FROM FOUR-DAY TRIP TO BENGHAZI OBSERVED CIVILIAN TRAFFIC OF EGYPTIAN HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS DEPARTING FOR EGYPT WHICH PRESUMABLY MEANS BORDER STILL OPEN EXCEPT FOR CURFEW HOURS. POLOFF ALSO OBSERVED PRESENCE OF STRICT SECURITY MEASURES AT BENGHAZI AIRPORT AND PRESENCE OF TEN MIRAGE AIRCRAFT.

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COMMENT: MOST RECENT INCIDENTS IN RAPIDLY DETERIORATING RELATIONS BETWEEN LIBYA AND EGYPT, ADDED TO LARG MEDIA PREPARATION OF LIBYANS FOR WAR WITH EGYPT, SUGGESTS LARG AUTHORITIES READ SERIOUSLY EGYPT MEANS TO ATTACK LIBYA. WARNINGS OF EXPULSION OF EGYPTIAN CITIZENS AND QADHAFI'S ALLEGED INQUIRY ABOUT ABILITY OF GOVERNMENT OFFICES TO FUNCTION IN ABSENCE OF EGYPTIANS SUGGEST LARG WILLEXPUL A SYMBOLIC NUMBER OF EGYPTIANS.
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